

## AB 982 Public Advisory Group

Meeting Held March 23 and 24, 2000  
State Water Resources Control Board Hearing Room

### Meeting Summary

**Convene Meeting:** Co-Chair Beckman convened the meeting and declared a quorum for the meeting at 10 am on March 23, 2000.

**March 3, 2000 Meeting Summary:** The meeting summary was approved without change.

**Proposal for the comprehensive surface water monitoring program:** State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) staff presented an outline for the comprehensive surface water quality monitoring proposal, discussed general strategies for implementing ambient monitoring in polluted and clean areas, and discussed many of the features of the surface water monitoring program. The staff pointed out several locations in the documents where changes had been made in response to the Public Advisory Group (PAG) comments. The PAG requested that changes made on any draft document be identified using ~~strikeout~~ and underline.

After discussing several concepts raised in handouts by the environmental groups, the PAG discussed several points that could be used as goals for the proposal for comprehensive monitoring. The PAG recommended that the program be focussed on monitoring ambient conditions of waters in each hydrologic unit of the State at least every 5 years. The monitoring information should also be interpreted once it is collected.

This umbrella monitoring program should establish minimum baseline monitoring requirements, consistent monitoring methods, data quality objectives, centralized data management, and centralized reporting. The umbrella program should also consider all existing data and other monitoring efforts. This ambient monitoring focus would be separate from the types of monitoring designed to identify water quality problems.

A second part of the monitoring effort should be directed to water quality problem identification. The Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) should conduct any additional monitoring to identify problems in accordance to regional priorities using the protocols (templates) and methodologies established in the Statewide umbrella program. The program would establish requirements that all data used in connection with the comprehensive monitoring program be verifiable, useable, and accessible to the public through a centralized location.

The PAG recommended that the monitoring proposal be restructured to reflect these priorities.

**Comprehensive data management:** The PAG discussed the merits of establishing a consolidated centralized statewide data and analysis system, which would consolidate all existing water quality data along with its respective protocols and methodologies. The comprehensive data management system should be maintained in a centralized location and made available to the public.

**Videotape recording at PAG meetings:** The videotaping issue was discussed during the afternoon session on March 23. The concerns over how the videotape would be used were discussed. A motion to adopt a change in the operating procedures was presented by the environmental group organizations that said statements made by PAG members may not always represent the view of the organization they represent. A substitute motion was made by the discharger organizations that focussed on members not using what is said at PAG meetings to further a group's litigation interest or agenda.

**ACTION:** The substitute motion was defeated (12 no votes, 11 yes votes). The main motion was approved (15 yes votes, 8 no votes with 2 abstentions). Please note that a two-thirds majority is required to change the operating procedures. On March 24, the PAG reconsidered the main motion and one member changed his vote. The motion was therefore approved 16 to 1 with 1 abstention. The new language was placed in Article V, Section 1 of the PAG Operating Procedures.

The PAG heard a presentation on the Central Coast RWQCB ambient monitoring efforts.

**Adjourn:** PAG meeting was adjourned until 9:00 AM March 24, 2000.

**Reconvene Meeting:** Co-Chair Johns reconvened the meeting and declared a quorum for the meeting at approximately 9 am on March 24, 2000.

**SWRCB Water Quality program structure and effectiveness as it relates to Clean Water Act Section 303(d):** The PAG began with a general discussion of some of the perceived deficiencies in the State's efforts to develop TMDLs. SWRCB staff provided a general overview of the TMDL process, California's adoption procedures, and the approximate numbers of TMDLs completed and under development. There was a brief discussion of the estimated costs of TMDL development. The PAG inquired about the status of the State's water quality control program, the continuous planning process (CPP), and how the Section 303(d) requirements fits into this strategy. Discussion also focused on the various budget amounts contributed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State for monitoring, TMDL development, and TMDL effectiveness evaluation.

**ACTION:** The PAG recommended that the SWRCB Staff prepare a brief staff report on TMDLs including a discussion of the historical background, a summary of the current TMDL workplans, the current budget structure and a general discussion of future plans with regard to this issue. The PAG also requested a status report on the Federal 319 process and the continuing planning process.

The PAG also requested information on the System for Water Information Management (SWIM).

The PAG turned its attention to a discussion on issues regarding the lack of TMDL listing and de-listing criteria. The PAG developed a draft recommendation on the need for a SWRCB-adopted Policy on listing, delisting and minimum acceptable and credible information for listing sites. The Group also agreed on the need for a SWRCB Policy on requiring RWQCBs to consider existing data during the Section 303(d) process.

ACTION: The following statement was approved by the PAG (12 yes votes, 11 no votes): The program for monitoring and TMDLs should include a component that identifies pollutants created or mobilized in areas that effect each waterbody.

The PAG then revisited many of the monitoring issues discussed on March 23, 2000. The PAG prepared a letter to the SWRCB providing specific comments on the proposed comprehensive ambient monitoring program.

**ACTION:** The PAG unanimously approved the letter. The letter, in part, stated that the SWRCB should create a ambient water quality monitoring program that will monitor both clean and polluted areas. There is a critical need to emphasize the need to for standardization and consistency in monitoring and reporting methods. There was strong support for the creation and use of standardized templates and protocols, which will allow greater use of monitoring data collected. Finally, the PAG agreed that data management in general needs to be a priority issue in the State's monitoring program.

The PAG letter was delivered to the SWRCB and is posted on the SWRCB website.

**Public Forum:** One person made a presentation to the PAG. He suggested that PAG use electronic mail for correspondence and post as much information as possible on the SWRCB website. As a consequence of the PAG's discussion, SWRCB staff will only send paper copies of meeting agenda packages to those members, alternates, and interested parties that request paper copies.

**Adjourn:** The PAG discussed several items for its next meeting (e.g., biomonitoring, the continuing planning process, TMDL process, and elements of TMDLs). The PAG meeting was scheduled for May 4 and 5, 2000.

**Written Proxy Votes:** Bill Thomas and Zeke Grader.